

Statement by Willy Brandt before the Bundestag (Bonn, 28 October 1969)

Caption: In his investiture address, given on 28 October 1969 in Bonn, the German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, proposes to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the opening of a dialogue between the two States on new bases.

Source: United States-Department of State. Documents on Germany 1944-1985. Washington: Department of State, [s.d.]. 1421 p. (Department of State Publication 9446). p. 1049-1050.

Copyright: United States of America Department of State

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement_by_willy_brandt_before_the_bundestag_bonn_28_october_1969-en-ad70d046-ab2d-463a-bf8e-9391078d25f9.html

Last updated: 02/07/2015

Statement by Chancellor Willy Brandt before the Bundestag (Bonn, 28 October 1969)

[...]

Ladies and gentlemen, this government works on the assumption that the questions which have risen for the German people out of World War II and from the national treachery committed by the Hitler regime can ultimately be answered only in a European peace order. However, no one can dissuade us from our conviction that the Germans have a right to self-determination just as any other nation.

The object of our practical political work in the years immediately ahead is to preserve the unity of the nation by easing the tenseness of relations between the two parts of Germany. The Germans are not only connected by reason of their language and their history with all its splendor and its misery, we are all at home in Germany. And we still have common tasks and a common responsibility to insure peace among us and in Europe.

Twenty years after the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany and of the GDR we must prevent any further alienation of the two parts of the German nation; that is, arrive at a regular *modus vivendi* and from there proceed to cooperation.

This is not just a German interest, for it is also important for peace in Europe and for East-West relations. Our own attitude and that of our friends toward the international relations of the GDR depends on the attitude of East Berlin itself. It is, by the way, not our intention to curtail the benefits derived by our compatriots from international trade and cultural exchanges.

The Federal Government will continue the policy initiated in December 1966 by Chancellor Kiesinger and his government and again offers the Council of Ministers of the GDR negotiations at government level without discrimination on either side, which should lead to contractually agreed cooperation. International recognition of the GDR by the Federal Republic is out of the question. Even if two states exist in Germany, they are not foreign countries to each other, their relations with each other can only be of a special nature.

Following up the policy of its predecessor, the Federal Government declares that its readiness for binding agreements on the reciprocal renunciation of the use or threat of force applies equally with regard to the GDR.

The Federal Government will advise the United States, Britain, and France to continue energetically the talks begun with the Soviet Union on easing and improving the situation of Berlin. The status of the city of Berlin under the special responsibility of the four powers must remain untouched. This must not be a hindrance to seeking facilities for traffic within and to Berlin.

We shall continue to insure the viability of Berlin. West Berlin must be placed in a position to assist in improving the political, economic, and cultural relations between the two parts of Germany.

We welcome the renewed increase of intra-German trade. This has partly been due to the facilities provided by the agreement of 6 December 1968. The Federal Government considers a further expansion of these neighborly trade relations desirable.

[...]